

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03331 01 OF 02 131120Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 TRSE-00 /078 W
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O 131046Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1381
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3331

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
BRUSSELS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE
FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: THE FIRST WEEK

1. SUMMARY: BASED ON OUR FIRST WEEK IN SALISBURY, WE CAN REPORT A LITTLE, BUT NOT MUCH, PROGRESS TOWARDS AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING (APM) AFTER MANY IMPRESSIONS AND MANY CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS SECTORS OF SOCIETY. AS FOLLOWING TEL WILL REPORT, WE HAD SOME SUCCESS WITH ENGAGING OFFICIALS OF THE REGIME IN A DISCUSSION OF THE MODALITIES OF A CONFERENCE. THE PRINCIPALS, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY ON THE AFRICAN SIDE, HAVE SO FAR GIVEN NO INDICATION OF AN INCLINATION TO
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 03331 01 OF 02 131120Z

MODIFY THEIR OPPOSITION TO A MEETING. THERE IS WHITE SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF NKOMO'S RETURN, BUT LITTLE APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY COMPROMISES. PRESSURES WILL HAVE TO BUILD BEFORE AN APM WILL BE ACCEPTED. THEY MAY COME FROM THE SMITH GROUP UNWILLING TO LEAVE POWER WITHOUT RESOLVING THE WAR AND FROM MUZOREWA'S FEAR OF LOSS OF POLITICAL

SUPPORT FROM INCREASING IDENTIFICATION WITH THE
SECURITY FORCES. END SUMMARY

2. WE ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14 WITH
THE DEPUTIES TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHO, IF ANYTHING,
ARE MORE OPPOSED TO A MEETING THAN THEIR SUPERIORS. WE
WILL AT THAT TIME REVIEW THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AN
APM. WE WILL MAKE OUR APPROACH LOW KEY ARGUING ALSO
FOR THE CONTINUATION OF CONTACTS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN
COMMUNICATION AND EFFECTIVELY ASSESS THE DEVELOPING
SITUATION IN RHODESIA. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT, UNLESS
WE GIVE OTHER REASONS FOR BEING HERE BEYOND PRESSING
FOR AN APM, AFRICAN POLITICANS MAY FORCE THE REGIME
TO RESIST ALLOWING US TO RETURN. SO FAR, THERE HAS
BEEN NO MENTION TO US OF SITHOLE'S REPORTED PROPOSAL
TO INVITE THE BRITISH TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERNAL
SETTLEMENT -- EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, ETC.
(PRETORIA 3190). GAYLARD PROBED US ON THE SUBJECT
OF ELECTION OBSERVERS AND WE REPLIED NEGATIVELY
(PRETORIA 3322). IF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DEPUTIES BRING
IT UP WEDNESDAY, WE WILL REPLY SIMILARLY ALONG THE
LINES OF OWEN'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

3. WE HAVE RECEIVED MIXED SIGNALS ON THE PROGRESS
OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. ON THE ONE HAND, IT
IS BEING HEAVILY CRITICIZED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 03331 01 OF 02 131120Z

AND IN THE PRESS. THE INITIAL EXHILARATION AT
HAVING ACHIEVED ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE AND AN INDEPENDENCE
DATE HAS WORN OFF AFTER THREE MONTHS. THE COMPLAINT
IS THAT NOTHING FURTHER HAS BEEN DONE AND THE WAR
IS CONTINUING OR PERHAPS INCREASING IN IT'S LEVEL
OF VIOLENCE. STORIES OF KILLINGS ON BOTH SIDES ENTER
INTO MOST CONVERSATIONS. UMTALI AND BULAWAYO REPORT
GROWING TENSION AND CONTINUING ECONOMIC DECLINE.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE HEARD CREDIBLE
EVIDENCE THAT IN SOME AREAS THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE
DECREASE IN VIOLENCE. FIRST-HAND REPORTS FROM
FARMERS INDICATE SOME OF THEM HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH
GUERRILLAS AND ARE FEEDING THEM IN RETURN FOR BEING
LEFT ALONE. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS NOT
UNIVERSALLY BLEAK -- FOREIGN EXCHANGE IS STILL
AVAILABLE FOR NECESSITIES AND THE LARGE TOBACCO CROP,
WE UNDERSTAND, IS SELLING AT ITS HIGHEST PRICES IN
MANY YEARS. FINALLY, THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS
AGREEMENT ON AN ELECTION PROCEDURE AND PROMISE OF
ENDING SOME DISCRIMINATION PROVIDE STRAWS AT WHICH
THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SUPPORTERS ARE EAGERLY

GRASPING.

5. THERE IS A MAJOR EFFORT GOING INTO DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AND CEASEFIRE. COOPRATION GROWS BETWEEN THE SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE POLICE, SPECIAL BRANCH AND SECURITY FORCES. LARGE SUMS OF MONEY, CLOTHING, FOOD, ARE BEING DEVOTED TO MAKING CONTACT WITH GUERRILLA LEADERS IN THE SHONA PART OF THE COUNTRY. SOME SUCCESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND A NUMBER OF FAILURES. SOME GROUPS AT THE SECTION LEVEL (10 MEN) HAVE "COME OVER" AND ARE BEING USED TO ATTRACT OR FIGHT OTHERS, BUT SOME EMMISSARIES, ON RETURNING FROM CONTACTS WITH UANC OR ZANU SITHOLE, WERE PROMPTLY KILLED BY ZANLA FORCES. THE PROCESS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 PRETOR 03331 01 OF 02 131120Z

LIKELY TO BE A SLOW ONE. SECURITY OFFICERS ESTIMATE THAT REAL PROGRESS MAY NOT BE DEMONSTRABLE BEFORE OCTOBER. IN THE MEANTIME, LEVEL OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BOUGHT TO "COME OVER" AND LOYAL PF FORCES MAY WELL INCREASE. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE, THEREFORE, THAT AN IMPRESSION OF DE-ESCALATING VIOLENCE CAN BE PROJECTED VERY SOON.

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03331 02 OF 02 131132Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 3331

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
BRUSSELS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE
FROM LOW

6. ONE RECEIVES AN IMPRESSION OF RAPID SHIFT OF FOCUS FROM CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SMITH REGIME AND THE NATIONALISTS TO THE GROWING GULF BETWEEN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NATIONALISTS. THE POSITIONS OF THE WHITES IN MANY WAYS ARE BECOMING IRRELEVANT. THUS, WHITE FARMERS CAN BUY SAFETY AS THE PF FOCUSES ON ITS INTERNAL ENEMIES. THE OBVIOUSLY CHANGING ATTITUDES OF WHITES AND THE ENDING OF DISCRIMINATION HAVE LITTLE IMPACT ON THE WAR AND HOW TO END IT. SMITH, HIMSELF, APPEARS TO HAVE LESS INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION AS EACH DAY GOES BY. THE DECISION OF THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO STICK WITH THE SETTLEMENT
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 03331 02 OF 02 131132Z

AND HOLD SMITH TO IT IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE POSITION OF THE WHITES. THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SECURITY FORCES' EFFORT TO PRESS ON WITH THE WAR AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE CEASEFIRE EFFORT, INCREASES AS TIME GOES ON.

7. MOST WHITE GROUPS SEEM TO AGREE THAT NKOMO'S PRESENCE IS VIRTUALLY INDISPENSABLE FOR A LASTING SETTLEMENT TO BE ACHIEVED. THE NAIVE ARE PREPARED TO FORGIVE HIM AND SAY HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE CAN RETURN NOW. THE SECURITY FORCES ARE MAKING LITTLE ATTEMPT WITH THEIR CEASEFIRE PROGRAM IN THE MATABELE AREA OF THE COUNTRY. NO ONE YET SEEMS TO BE PREPARED TO MAKE THE SACRIFICES THROUGH MODIFYING THE AGREEMENT NECSSARY TO BRING NKOMO BACK. AS FOR MUGABE, THE WHITES ARE CONVINCED OF HIS EXTREMISM AND THE SECURITY FORCES ARE DEVOTING THEIR MAJOR EFFORT TO CUTTING INTO HIS SUPPORT.

8. COMMENT: THERE WILL HAVE TO BE STRONGER POLITICAL PRESSURES BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS BEFORE THEY ARE LIKELY TO AGREE TO AN APM. THESE CAN COME BOTH FROM AFRICAN POPULATION DISSATISFIED WITH THE FAILURE OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO BRING PEACE AS WELL, PERHAPS, FROM THE SMITH AND THE WHITE MINISTERS. NUF LEADER, ALLAN SAVORY, IS BEGINNING TO ATTACK SMITH AS A SELL-OUT WHO IS ABANDONING THE

WHITES IN RHODESIA TO PROLONGED WARFARE, IN HIS EFFORT
TO SAVE HIS OWN HIDE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WHITE
LEADERSHIP OF THE REGIME IS YET CONVINCED THAT ITS
CEASEFIRE EFFECTS CAN NOT PROSPER. IF AND WHEN SUCH
TIME COMES, THEY MAY BE WILLING TO BRING ENOUGH PRESSURE
ON SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA TO AGREE TO A MEETING. THE
OTHER INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS WHICH
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 03331 02 OF 02 131132Z

COULD LEAD THEM TO AGREE TO AN APM WOULD BE THEIR FEAR
THAT THEY WERE LOSING TOO MUCH POLITICAL SUPPORT BY
THEIR CONTINUED ASSOCIATION IN THE SETTLEMENT. THIS
IS LIKELY TO APPLY CHIEFLY TO MUZOREWA WHO STILL HAS
WIDE POPULAR SUPPORT. IT MAY COME FROM CONTINUED
LARGE-SCALE LOSS OF LIFE OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION
AT THE HANDS OF THE SECURITY FORCES AS OCCURRED
OVER THE LAST WEEKEND. IN ANY CASE, THESE TWO
TRENDS WILL REQUIRE MORE TIME TO DEVELOP. THEIR
PROGRESS SHOULD BE MORE APPARENT WHEN WE NEXT RETURN
TO SALISBURY ON JUNE 20.
EDMONDSON

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